

1. What are the most important **achievements** arising from WSIS that should be highlighted in the Zero Draft? \*

The WSIS+20 review presents a historic opportunity to move beyond tokenism and enshrine digital accessibility at the heart of a truly inclusive Information Society. Without explicit commitments and concrete actions for persons with disabilities, and without the active leadership of people with lived experience of disability, the vision of universal, meaningful, and affordable access cannot be realized.

The position of IGF-DCAD (Internet Governance Forum – Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability) on the paper is that despite decades of advocacy, the persistent digital divide facing persons with disabilities is only mentioned tangentially throughout the WSIS+20 Elements Paper. Given that over 1.5 billion people globally live with disabilities, there must be a stronger, explicit commitment to digital accessibility woven into every thematic area, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, inclusion must be explicitly defined to encompass accessibility for persons with disabilities as a non-negotiable component of people-centred development, recognizing that people with lived experience of disability bring essential insights and expertise to digital governance.

2. What are the most important **challenges** to the achievement of WSIS outcomes to date and in the future that need to be addressed in the Zero Draft? \*

The co-facilitators and all stakeholders should do more to ensure that accessibility and the inclusion of people with lived experience of disability are not afterthoughts, but core priorities reflected throughout the WSIS+20 outcome documents, the WSIS Forum, and in the future mandate of the IGF. Only by doing so can we build a multistakeholder, inclusive governance model that serves the needs of all people and sets a precedent for equitable global digital policymaking

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and serious risks for persons with disabilities. It is vital to:

- A. Embed accessibility guidelines in artificial intelligence development standards.
- B. Include organizations of persons with disabilities and individuals with lived experience of disability in governance discussions around artificial intelligence to ensure inclusive design.
- C. Support capacity building for persons with disabilities to engage in artificial intelligence policy and technical development.

3. What are the most important **priorities** for action to achieve the WSIS vision of a 'people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society' in the future, taking into account emerging trends? \*

1. Participation & Capacity Building

While the document emphasizes capacity building for developing countries, it overlooks targeted programs for persons with disabilities, who often face compounded barriers due to inaccessible education, training, and digital tools. It is essential to:

- A. Fund & develop accessible training materials co-created with people with lived experience of disability.
- B. Support organizations of persons with disabilities to deliver digital skills programs.
- C. Set diversity targets for disability representation in leadership, including in the IGF MAG.
- D. Create mentorship pathways for persons with disabilities, leveraging the lived experience of disability to inform leadership development and participation in Internet governance.
- E. Integrate disability indicators into capacity-building monitoring frameworks.

2. Digital Divides (paras 28–35)

Persistent digital divides cannot be effectively bridged without addressing accessibility barriers as a core cause of exclusion for persons with disabilities. The Elements Paper should call for:

- A. Adoption of international accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1/2.2).
- B. Requirements for public and private digital service providers to implement accessibility by design, informed by the perspectives of people with lived experience of disability.
- C. Expand the enabling environment section to include critical elements of an enabling environment issues, such as regulations, competition, affordable access, especially for persons with disabilities

3. Human Rights & Ethical Dimensions (paras 43–50)

The strong emphasis on protecting human rights online is commendable, but must recognize the intersectionality of digital rights for persons with disabilities, including:

- A. The right to accessible information & communication as foundational to freedom of expression.
- B. The heightened risks posed by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, which can exclude persons with disabilities through biased datasets or inaccessible design.
- C. The prevalence of technology-enabled abuse specifically targeting persons with disabilities, including cyberbullying and exploitation.
- D. The necessity of involving people with lived experience of disability in designing ethical safeguards to ensure new technologies respect & promote human rights.

4. Internet Governance & the IGF

The IGF Mandate should be permanently extended & formally recognise the role of local & regional IGFs and the Dynamic Coalitions which play such an important part in promoting inclusion. The IGF must be enabled to fulfil its full mandate. This can only be done if the IGF is backed by secure & stable funding, combining a mix of core UN funding/voluntary contributions.

The renewed IGF mandate must:

- A. Explicitly include the promotion of accessibility & participation of persons with disabilities as a core objective.
- B. Prioritize practical measures such as travel fellowships, online accessibility features, & hybrid
- C. Embed accessibility requirements into all IGF processes and structures, ensuring disability-inclusive leadership across national and regional Internet governance initiatives.
- D. Encourage the appointment of people with lived experience of disability to leadership positions within the IGF's governance structures, including NRIs, such as the Multistakeholder Advisory Group(s), to ensure their authentic representation.

4. What **additional themes/issues**, if any, should be included in the Elements Paper? \*

The elements paper and the WSIS process seem to be missing the key factor of persons with disabilities, who make up 15% of the world population, and they are missing from this process. They should be incorporated in all the themes and issues in this paper and not just as an afterthought or a token, but with real inclusion.

5. Do you wish to comment on **particular themes/issues/paragraphs** in the Elements Paper? \*

Please see section 3 on important priorities & below:

**Participation & Capacity Building**

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- C. Expand the enabling environment section to include critical elements of an enabling environment issues, such as regulations, competition, affordable access, especially for persons with disabilities

**IGF/Internet Governance**

The IGF has long been an essential platform for advancing accessibility, including the work of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility & Disability. The renewed IGF mandate must:

- A. Explicitly include the promotion of accessibility & participation of persons with disabilities
- B. Prioritize practical measures such as travel fellowships, online accessibility features, and hybrid meeting accommodations to enable active participation of persons with disabilities.
- C. Embed accessibility requirements into all IGF processes & structures, ensuring disability-inclusive leadership across national & regional Internet governance initiatives.
- D. Encourage the appointment of people with lived experience of disability to leadership positions within the IGF's governance structures, including NRIs, the MAG to ensure authentic representation.

**Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICT**

In the sections on Cybersecurity there are increased challenges posed to cybersecurity and by cybercrime have become substantially more complex & serious since WSIS because of the growing pervasiveness of ICTs, the range of services & transactions now undertaken online & the extent of data held on individuals & organisations. We need to do more work at promoting cyber resilience with all communities, but with particular focus on persons with disabilities & to better integrate it into the WSIS development agenda.

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**Monitoring and Measurement**

Digital policy monitoring often omits disability-disaggregated data. The WSIS+20 review must:

- A. Incorporate indicators tracking accessibility progress—such as the percentage of websites & apps meeting international accessibility standards & the proportion of persons with disabilities with meaningful internet access—into WSIS+20 monitoring frameworks, designed in consultation with people with lived experience of disability.

6. What suggestions do you have to support the development of the **WSIS framework** (WSIS Action Lines, IGF, WSIS Forum, UNGIS etc.)? \*

The position of IGF-DCAD (Internet Governance Forum – Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability) on the paper is that despite decades of advocacy, the persistent digital divide facing persons with disabilities is only mentioned tangentially throughout the WSIS+20 Elements Paper. Given that over 1.5 billion people globally live with disabilities, there must be a stronger, explicit commitment to digital accessibility woven into every thematic area, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, inclusion must be explicitly defined to encompass accessibility for persons with disabilities as a non-negotiable component of people-centred development, recognizing that people with lived experience of disability bring essential insights and expertise to digital governance.

The WSIS Forum event this year reportedly discriminated against persons with lived-in experience of disabilities, which is a violation of CRPD and other international conventions, but also against the spirit of inclusion which the WSIS process aims to achieve. To organize accessible meetings, the Dynamic Coalition for Accessibility and Disability provides comprehensive guidelines for the IGF, which WSIS can also follow. These can be found here, <https://igf-dcad.org/accessibility-guidelines/>

Following these guidelines will ensure that the meeting will be fully accessible for persons with disabilities.

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7. Do you have any **other** comments? \*

As Coordinators of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability, we urge co-facilitators and all stakeholders to ensure that accessibility and the inclusion of people with lived experience of disability are included in all parts of the process and not just as tokens. Real inclusion is not just being added to the document; it is also integrated into the core parts of the organization. We understand that this may require a cultural change more than just an increased awareness. But we do need to start somewhere.

8. Who is **submitting** this input? \*

Kindly provide the name of the person submitting this input, as well as the associated country, organization, stakeholder type, and relevant contact information

Judith Hellerstein (US) & Dr. Muhammad Shabbir (Pakistan). Organization-DCAD- Civil Society

9. Please provide your **e-mail** address: \*

Please enter an email